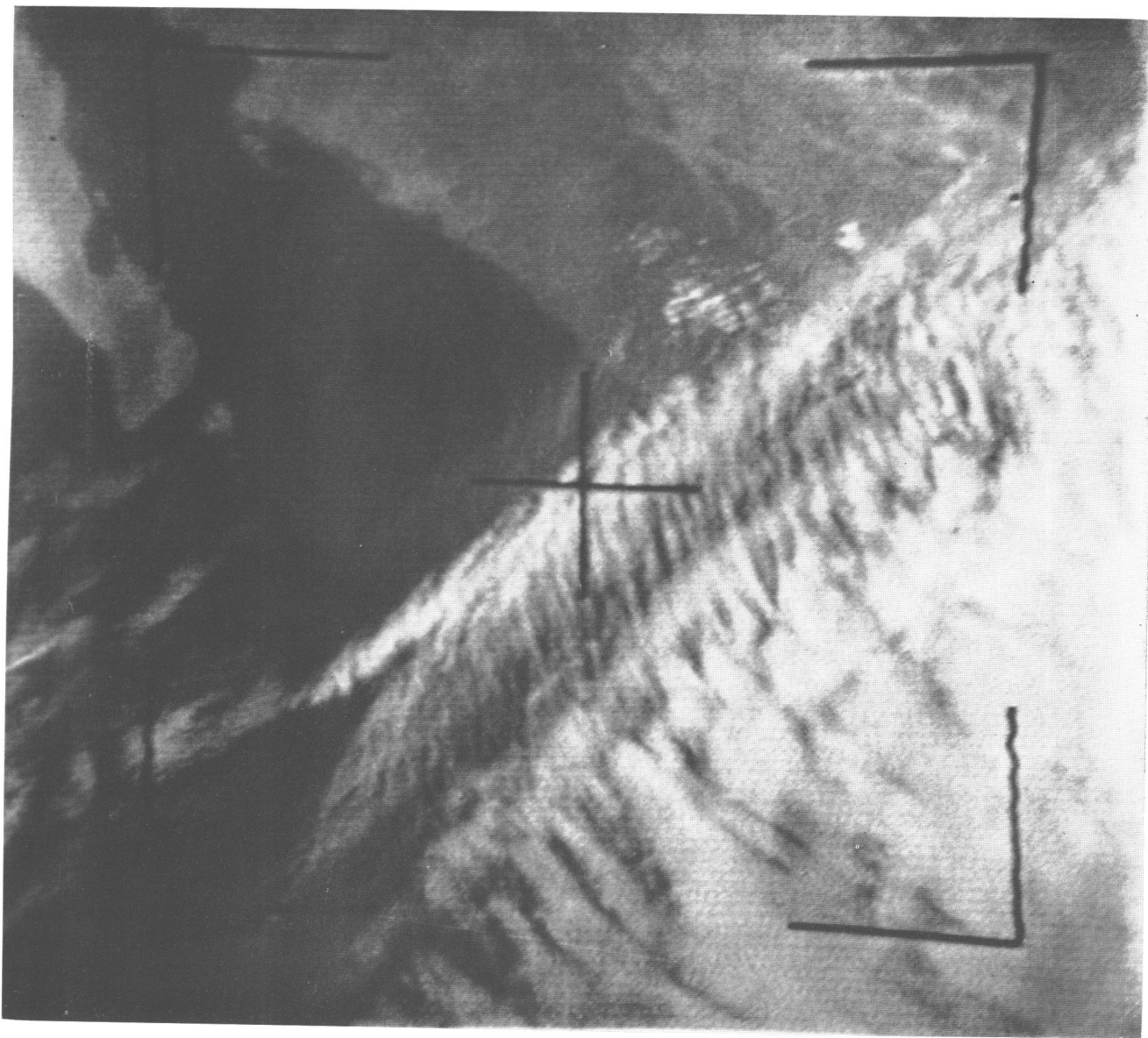


PICTURE OF THE MONTH



This striking cloud formation across the west coast of Mexico was photographed by TIROS VII (pass 2992/2991, frame 4) on January 7, 1964, at 1919 GMT. The picture was received at Wallops Island, Va., via tape mode. Portions of Baja California and the Gulf of California appear in the upper left.

The edge of the main cloud mass, oriented approximately northeast-southwest through the center-cross fiducial mark, is believed to be associated with the jet stream and to be roughly parallel to it and perhaps slightly south of the jet core. Detailed upper-wind information over this area is lacking, but farther north there was a deepening upper-air trough over the Rockies at this time, indicating the likely existence of strong southwest or west-southwest winds over the pictured area.

The clouds are believed to be mainly upper-level alto-cumulus and dense cirrus. Whatever their true nature, a remarkable structure of transverse bands is clearly apparent. In the region through the center-cross fiducial mark, individual bands are 10 to 20 mi. in width and are oriented nearly north-south. Toward the lower right corner, larger bands are seen curving out toward the southeast. Just above the center-cross fiducial mark and across its northern and western ends is an area of thinner cirrus which also shows a faint banded structure, here aligned north-northeast—south-southwest!

The small patch of clouds over Mexico, somewhat above and to the right of the center-cross mark, is believed to be lower-level cumulus clouds.